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A
S E R M O N,
OCCASIONED BY THE
D E A T H
O F

Mrs. ELIZABETH FORD,

Who departed this Life MAY 31, 1781,

In the Fifty-first Year of her Age.

Preached at MILES-LANE, LONDON, June 10.

By WILLIAM FORD. R

“ She being dead yet speaketh.”

L O N D O N :

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S. E. R. M. O. N.

THE OCCASION OF THE

D. E. A. T. H.

OF

Mrs. ELIZABETH FORD



Who departed this life on the 21st of

the 11th month of the year 1834.

At the age of 74 years.

By WILLIAM FORD

of the County of Middlesex.

Printed by J. G. & J. H. at the British Museum.

LONDON.

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[Price 2s. 6d.]

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

*I*N the publication of this plain Discourse I yield to the earnest request of some friends I would much wish to oblige. If God should, by the powerful influences of his good Spirit, bless this humble endeavour to promote his glory, as to one fearful mourning soul, set it home for the relief and quickening of surviving friends, much more by this mean gratify, in any degree, the fervent desires expressed in the following lines of the last Psalm the dear deceased directed me to read to her; it will be no small satisfaction to me; and to his grace be all the praise.

Let me thy power and truth proclaim
To the surviving age;
And leave a savour of thy name,
When I shall quit the stage.

The land of silence and of death
Attends my next remove;
O may these poor remains of breath
Teach the wide world thy love.

WATTS, Psal. lxxi, Third Part,

ADVERTISEMENT

In the publication of this Plain Treatise I
 yield to the earnest request of some friends I
 would send it to the public. It is God's word, and
 the powerful influence of his good Spirit, which
 has enabled me to promote his glory, in
 our Father's name, for it is done for the
 sake and glory of our Father's name.
 I am more by this than any other, in any degree.
 The present edition is the following
 kind of the first, which has been altered
 and is now to be printed; it will be no small satisfaction
 to me, and to his grace be all the praise.



Let me thy power and truth proclaim
 To the farthest age;
 And leave a witness of thy name,
 When I shall quit the stage.

The land of silence and of death
 Attends my next remove;
 O may these poor remains of truth
 Teach the wide world thy love.

WATTS, John, Third Part.

Ps A L M lxxiii. 24.

*Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,
and afterwards receive me to glory.*

THE dying bed of a christian is, in itself, a very distressing scene to surrounding friends; and the actual removal leads us to view, in very painful colours, the dominion of sin, and the ravages of the grave: it carries along with it a loss which very sensibly affects us;—a loss of what was most near and dear to us;—a loss of that, in which, perhaps, the principal part of our earthly happiness did consist. But, blessed be God, under such trying bereavements, a variety of very reviving and supporting considerations arise to assuage our grief, and moderate our sorrows. We are firmly persuaded, that though torn from our embraces, yet, as united to Christ, their departed spirits are now present with the Lord; that our dear friends, being made meet for the inheritance of the saints, are now put
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into the actual possession of it; that they are entirely released from all the pains, infirmities, doubts, fears, imperfections, sins, and temptations of the present state, under which they had long groaned, and under which, though we most tenderly felt for them, we could give them but little relief; and that they are now entered into the unutterable joy of their Lord. Sometimes God is so very indulgent to his dying servants themselves, as well as therein to those whom they leave behind, that he very wonderfully sustains their spirits in the last conflict; not only moderates, but removes the terrors of death, hands in to their souls the most precious cordials, and enables them to give a most glorious attestation to the fullness and sweetness of the consolations which are in Christ. In such circumstances, instead of grieving at our own loss, should we not rather congratulate our departed friends upon their unspeakable gain? When in the last sentences they have uttered, with grateful adoration to the God of their salvation, they have cried out, “ thou shalt guide me
 “ with thy counsel, and afterwards receive
 “ me to glory. Thy mercy and thy truth,
 “ they shall guide me unto thy holy hill.
 “ To the Father, to the Son, and to the

“ Holy Spirit, be equal and everlasting
 “ praises. Amen.”

The words of the text are the triumph of the faith of the Psalmist, after he had recovered from a very sore temptation, occasioned by the present prosperity of many wicked men, and the present afflicted state of many good men: and, blessed be God, they afford just ground to every believer, cheerfully to rely upon a covenant God to conduct him safely through all the dangers of this wilderness, and through the dark valley unto eternal glory in his heavenly kingdom. In the words we would take notice of these two things:

I. The happiness of the saints, described in two very comprehensive branches.

II. The Psalmist's comfortable manner of expressing himself, as to his own view of these important matters.

I. We would observe the happiness of the saints, described in two very comprehensive particulars; “ Thou shalt guide me
 “ with thy counsel, and afterwards receive
 “ me to glory.”

We shall speak to them in the order of the text.

I. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel." This is a privilege peculiar to God's own people; to those whom he will afterwards receive unto glory. He preserves and provides for all his creatures; and orders all the events of time for his own glory; but it is the happiness of the saints to be under his special conduct. He guides them

In the way of faith in Christ. There is no forgiveness of sin, or acceptance with God, or interest in glory, but through the Redeemer. Those whom God guides, he draws unto Christ. Every one who hath learned of the Father, comes unto me, says Christ. The Father leads them to see their danger and misery, that there is salvation in no other but his Son, makes them afraid of resting in themselves, and renders them willing to receive and rely upon Christ, as the appointed Saviour for perishing sinners; to come to him as naked and helpless in themselves, crying out in the words of the Apostle, continually adopted by our deceased friend, "What things were gain to me, those I account all loss for Christ; yea, reckon them as dung, that I may be

“ be found in him, &c.” adding, “ be thou
 “ my strength, my righteousness, my Jesus,
 “ and my all.” The saints in glory ascribe
 all their triumphs to the Lamb that re-
 deemed them to God by his blood ; and
 those whom God is now preparing for that
 glory, he engages cheerfully to unite in the
 same divine song. He also enables them
 to be continually looking unto Jesus, and
 to live the life which they live in the flesh,
 through faith in the Son of God.

God guides his people in the way of ho-
 liness, as to the inward temper of their
 souls. The highway, in which God leads
 his people, is thus described by the prophet,
 Isaiah xxxv. 8. “ It shall be called the way
 “ of holiness : the unclean shall not pass
 “ over it.” The very idea that an infinitely
 holy God guides us, implies an agreement
 with him in the prevailing disposition of
 the spirit. Those whom he leads, he di-
 rects to enter in at the strait gate, which
 alone opens into the way to eternal life.
 Frequently call to your very serious remem-
 brance those words of the Apostle, “ If
 “ any man be in Christ, he is a new crea-
 “ ture ; old things are done away, and all
 “ things are become new :” and that po-
 sitive declaration of our Lord himself,
 “ Except

“ Except a man be born again, he cannot “ enter into the kingdom of God.” This is the happiness of such as are under the special conduct of God : they are born of God ; and the consequence thereof is, that they love as he loves, and hate what he hates (a very favourite sentiment of the dear deceased) ; as well as that if universal internal holiness was not commanded, yet the renewed soul, as born of God, must delight in it, and follow after it. Such are much afraid of not having a just sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the plague of their own hearts, and of taking up with some mere external conformity to the divine law. But they really delight in this law, because it is so exceeding broad, extending to the whole soul.

God guides his people in the way of ordinances. By the sacred institutions of religion, he trains them up for the pure, perfect, and most delightful worship of his heavenly courts. The soul, under God’s gracious directions, seeks its happiness in God, and is disposed to seek after him, in all the ways of his appointment, and in which he kindly promises to meet and bless them. “ Behold he prayeth,” is alledged by God himself to Ananias, as a proof of Saul’s

Saul's conversion; and that he was a chosen vessel unto him. Paul, brought up a Pharisee with great strictness, had performed the external duty constantly all his life; but now he prayed in a spiritual sense. In the secret exercises of religion, holy souls walk with God from day to day, live a life of nearness unto him, and maintain continual, if not joyful communion with him; their spirits, as guided by God, following hard after him. If secret duty is omitted, or hurried over as a task or burden, can we suppose ourselves under the divine conduct? Or if we can live in the wilful neglect of public ordinances? Holy souls in the sanctuary, long to behold God's power and his glory; esteem a day in his courts preferable to a thousand; hope to be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and that being planted in the house of the Lord, they shall flourish in the courts of their God, and bring forth more and more fruit. They, upon these accounts, highly prize the returning seasons of public worship. If the poor earthly tabernacle could be just patched up in the week, so as to enable to go to the house of God on the Lord's-day, in the inclement season, which affects weakly constitutions

situations very much, what a mercy has many a holy soul esteemed this to be?

God guides his people in the way of universal, external obedience to his commandments. As he leads them in the way of faith in Christ, and love to himself, he enables them, in their outward conduct, to evidence they have been made a willing people in the day of his power. They do not wish to have the law of God curtailed, in any instance, or to have a liberty to live in any kind of sin whatever. This is a contradiction to our being born of God, as the deceased frequently observed. Nothing a christian wants more than to be free from sin, and at present to hate it with a growing hatred. God's commands are not grievous: they observe them with pleasure, and aim at having respect unto them in all things, however carnal men complain that God's precepts are many of them hard sayings.

God guides his people, as he orders every thing relative to them in life and in death. These matters are all under his all-gracious direction. Their times are in his hands. Every particular event turns out according to his infinitely wise and merciful appointment ;

ment; or however according to his permission to answer in the end the best purpose unto them. But this leads to enquire, how does God guide them? The Psalmist tells us, "with his counsel;" which may take in the particular providence of God over his people. In the leadings of providence, God very frequently makes clear discoveries of his will to his people, and plainly points out the path of duty. What abundant reason have they, with great thankfulness, to acknowledge his very gracious providential conduct. Attentive to these important matters, they, with admiration of God's great kindness to them, remark a vast variety of circumstances, in which they see his interposition and appearance for them, as to their connections, situations, conditions, and engagements in life, upon which much of their comfort has greatly depended. What a comfortable thought to the christian, in this uncertain, changing, dying world, that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and that acknowledging God in all his ways, he may be assured that he will direct his paths.

But God guides his people with his counsel, as he gives us his *word*, to direct us at all times. God himself speaks to us in the

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holy scriptures : they are his word, and they contain a perfect rule of faith and practice, most profitable to direct, and designed to make us wise unto salvation. The word of God is intended to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path ; and if God orders our goings by it, then our feet shall not slide. His people thankfully receive this revelation of his will ; they treasure it up in their hearts, that they may not sin against him ; and they have constant recourse to it, that they may walk so as to please God. God guides them by his word as he disposes them to acquaint themselves with it, as a perfect rule ; and engages their dutiful subjection of soul to his will, as made known to us therein. Which leads me to add, that it is their distinguishing privilege to be guided by his counsel, as he guides them

By his Spirit. He is the best counsellor, and they feel they greatly need this internal guide. He has restored their souls, and has recovered them into the paths of righteousness. And how ready are they, with admiration at his free, rich, and sovereign grace, to acknowledge, that he, by his secret counsel, convinced them of the dangerous destructive paths of sin, made them willing

willing to forsake it, and engaged them heartily to close with Christ as the all-sufficient Savior, and yield up themselves unto God in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten. In the frequent review of these sacred transactions, they are deeply concerned to give him the entire glory of his own work ; and they desire to live under a constant sense of the absolute necessity of being at all times under his gracious guidance. With what fervor do they cry out, “ Lord, take not thy holy spirit from me, though I have sore grieved him ; Lord, thy spirit is good, lead me in the land of uprightness, and uphold me with thy free spirit.” What a rich mercy do they esteem it, that such poor blind stupid perverse creatures as they feel themselves to be, should be led by the Holy Spirit, and that he should condescend to take up his abode in them, and cause them to hear his voice behind them, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when they might be ready to turn aside either to the right hand or to the left. This divine Spirit guides his people, as he brings the things of God to their remembrance, sets them home with power and sweetness unto their hearts, engages the soul to believe what God has said, and to trust in him to

perform what he has promised. He also sanctifies by his gracious influences, transforms them into the divine image, and makes them meet for the master's use. He assists, strengthens, supports, and comforts them, and he enables them to persevere unto the end.

I shall just hint at some particulars, that tend to enlarge our views of the happiness of God's people in being under his direction.

He guides them *effectually*, which none can do but himself. He in some instances leaves them to follow their own device, as he did good Hezekiah, that he might know what was in his heart, and that they may prize more highly God's gracious direction. He guides them prevailingly in his own right way, that they may not mistake it, and that they may not turn out of it, and that all their most artful or most powerful enemies may never be able to drive or seduce them out of it.

He guides them amidst all their afflictions and trials. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. And this is no proof that an infinitely gracious God does not guide them. Quite the contrary. He sees that these painful crosses and disappointments,

these heavy trials and grievous afflictions, are better for them, much more for the advancement of their eternal interests, than outward ease and prosperity. The measure of them, and the time of their continuance, is determined by their gracious guide. And it becomes us ever to remember it is only if need be, that we are in heaviness through manifold temptations. He performs the thing which he has appointed for us in every afflictive event, under all its most distressing circumstances. He leads by a right way to the city of habitation.

He guides amidst all their fears. How frequently are they under very alarming apprehensions. They fear their enemies will prevail against them, that they shall never be able to resist. They are tempted to believe it is in vain to go on in religious exercises, that they never knew any thing of the power of God's grace upon their hearts, and the like. Though their fears are some of them very sinful and God-dishonouring, yet still he guides them. Yea in many instances he sees it best for them, that they should be exercised with many fears; these he sanctifies for their progress in the divine life.

By

By glimmering hopes and gloomy fears,
 They trace the sacred road,
 Through dismal deeps and dangerous snares,
 They make their way to God*.

God also guides his people, as to the most suitable time for ordering every event. Our times are in his hands. He not only in every circumstance orders as he sees best: but his time for every event, from our birth to our death, is the season he sees to be best for that purpose. This was the observation made by the dear deceased, by which I first knew she was acquainted what the fatal distemper was. She said it seemed strange she should have it when she had escaped it so many years. And before I could make any reply she added, ' But God's time is the best time for every thing.' Happy for us if we can by faith live under the firm persuasion of this comfortable truth, as to ourselves, and all near and dear to us.

God guides his people continually. It is his very encouraging assurance he will never leave them, no he will never forsake them. Their dear christian friends and relations, with whom they have frequently taken sweet counsel together, leave them to

* Dr. Watts's 53d Hymn, B. 2; a very favourite Hymn of the dear deceased, daily repeated.

pursue the remainder of their dangerous journey alone, without any further assistance from them. Their spiritual guides are removed by death; but an eternal covenant-keeping God will be their guide still. They never are more sensible of their need of his gracious conduct than under these bereavements, and, blessed be his name, he will guide them continually. He will be their guide even unto death, as well as be their God for ever and ever.

He will guide his people through the valley of the shadow of death. Therefore they may triumph with the Psalmist, and say, 'though I walk through the gloomy vale, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me to direct, strengthen and support me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' All the various circumstances attending our removal are under the gracious disposal of him who has the keys of hell and of death. Under the firm persuasion of this comfortable truth, and the certainty of the great shepherd's most tender attentive assistance and gracious presence in that peculiarly trying season, believers cheerfully commit themselves into the hands of a covenant God, that he would guide them with his counsel.

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But the Psalmist expresses his hope in God not only thus in life and in death, but of happiness beyond conception in a never-ending state of existence, and shall afterwards receive me to glory. We go on therefore to consider,

2. The comprehensive felicity of the saints in the world to come as thus described, 'and afterwards receive me to glory.' This is the grand final intention of God's grace unto them. His ultimate design. "Fear not, little flock," says our kind Redeemer, "it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Let us consider each of the expressions in the text.

"Thou shalt receive me." God accepts his saints through the beloved in the present world. They are brought nigh unto God by the blood of Christ. They are reconciled unto him, made partakers of the divine nature, and he now looks upon them as his dear and pleasant children, and sometimes he indulges them with the light of his countenance, and manifests himself unto them. But still those who are highly favoured are here under many tokens of his displeasure. Here his children are many of them frequently mourning under the frowns of their heavenly Father, and lamenting

menting the hidings of his face, and not a few perhaps walk in darkness and see no light. But in the better world God receives his people. His arms are open to embrace them with a most endearing smile upon his countenance. He will there admit them into his presence, that they may be for ever with the Lord, and may eternally enjoy the highest proofs of his affection unto them, without any interruption, and without any abatement of their sublime joys.

The happiness to which God will receive them is called glory. And it is such an exceeding glory, that in this present state of darkness we can form but very faint ideas of its greatness and excellency. Glory has been defined grace completed, and grace in the heart now has been called glory begun ; but after all our best conceptions of it, at present it must be owned that we see but through a glass darkly. However, the representations given of it in the word of God tend to excite in the minds of such as are enlightened by grace, the most ardent desires after it. And it is also held up to our view in those sacred oracles by comparing it to objects most apt to strike our senses for their magnificence and splendor. It is promised them that they shall receive a crown

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of glory, an incorruptible crown, that they shall reign for ever and ever, that they shall shine as the stars in the kingdom of their Father, yea as the brightness of the sun. But by the assistance of divine revelation, we may mention several particulars, which may enable us to form some exalted apprehensions of this glory, though not adequate to its real excellence.

The happy place of their abode is called *Paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43; it is called by the apostle Paul the *third Heaven*, 2 Cor. xii. 2; and by the apostle John *the new Jerusalem*, in the noble description of it, Rev. xx. 10. to the end: it is said that it has the glory of God; and that it has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light of it. The King eternal, immortal, and invisible, has fixed his palace in it, and makes the brightest displays of his infinite glories there as King of kings and Lord of lords: before which splendor the most shining appearances of the richest eastern monarch must die away as the twinkling stars at the brightness of the sun.

The inhabitants of that world are all glorious. There shine all the different ranks of angelic spirits, and there reside the
spirits •

spirits of just men made perfect. The saints, however blemishes and infirmities and sins stained their glories on earth, appear there without the least blemish or spot. They have been presented before the throne without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, and ere long all the saints shall compose one glorious church.

In that happy state believers are received unto glory, as having gained a most complete victory over all their enemies. They appear there under the illustrious character of conquerors, and more than conquerors, through him who has loved them, triumphing over all their most powerful and spiteful enemies, with whom the contest had been fierce and long continued. There they stand before the throne and before the Lamb (every enemy being put under their feet) in their white robes, and palms of victory in their hands.

In heaven believers are received into glory, as their souls are wrought into a perfect resemblance to the holy Jesus. They are now in some measure transformed into his image. And they now aim at being as he was in the world. But too frequently the likeness is very faint; but there they will appear perfectly holy, even as he is holy.

How transporting the change to themselves, and how glorious will they appear in the eye of every beholder. The prospect of this glory made the Psalmist cry out, Psalm xvii. 15, "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness."

God receives his people to glory in heaven, as he there confers upon them the very high honor of being admitted into his immediate presence. He receives them to be his constant attendants. In this world a faint and transient glimpse of him fills their souls with joy unspeakable and full of glory; how great beyond description their joy, when they shall, in his heavenly court, behold him face to face, and be fixed in his temple above, to go no more out.

Believers will be received to glory in heaven as there they will constantly behold the glories of their exalted Savior. This he prayed for them, as what he well knew, would give them the greatest delight, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." What an honor will they conceive it conferred upon them, to behold Jesus their Savior glorified with the glory which he had with the Father before

the world was, as the eternal Son. What divine satisfaction to behold the glories to which he is exalted as Mediator, as the Lamb that was slain, who is worthy to receive honor and glory and power, because he has redeemed them to God by his blood; to see him exalted far above all principalities and powers, and as having a name given him above every name. If the glories of Christ on the mount of transfiguration upon earth so struck those disciples that were the honoured witnesses of it: how will his friends exult in the eternal display of all his brightest glories in heaven? And with what raptures will glorified saints behold the exalted honors there paid to their beloved adorable Redeemer, who was treated with so much neglect and scorn in our world.

In heaven God receives his people to glory, as even the exalted Mediator himself appears more glorious by the high honors conferred upon them. There Christ is glorified in his saints, and admired in all them who believe. How bright must their glories shine, when they will reflect fresh lustre upon their exalted Savior? What an amazing display will then be given of the glory of his grace, in having rescued all of them

them from the power of their enemies, in having carried on the good work in their hearts, and in having conducted each safe through all the dangers of the wilderness to the regions of eternal peace and joy. And how will the merits of his obedience unto death, (however lightly set by in our world,) then be displayed in its brightest glories: when all the shining ranks of angels round the throne, and the vast number which no man can number of the redeemed from among men, shall unite with one voice, in acknowledging it to be the procuring cause of all the bliss of these glorified saints; and ascribe the glory, the honor, and power unto him, on this account.

Believers will be received to glory, as they will be continually engaged in the most honorable employments: they will wait upon God day and night in his heavenly temple: they will serve him without interruption in the beauties of holiness, do his will with the utmost pleasure in every respect, and sing praise unto Him that sits upon the throne and unto the Lamb without ceasing.

They shall be received unto glory, as their bodies shall most certainly share in the
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the honors of a glorious resurrection unto eternal life through Jesus Christ. Their souls immediately at death enter into glory, and their bodies shall at God's appointed time be raised in glory, from all the dishonors of the grave. Those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. The wicked shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt, but the righteous unto eternal life. In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised. Then the dead in Christ will be raised incorruptible. Then this corruptible shall put on incorruption, this mortal shall put on immortality, and the body sown in dishonor will be raised in glory. Death will, through the almighty Captain of their salvation, be swallowed up in victory. Then those bodies which were committed as vile bodies unto the grave, shall come forth fashioned like unto the glorious body of their exalted Savior.

They will be received to glory, as their felicity will be compleat and eternal. Their happiness will be pure and unmixed: nothing can arise to interrupt it, or abate it through eternal ages. And they shall be for ever with the Lord. They shall then
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be received to glory in the most complete and perfect sense.

We are further to take notice, that “ God will guide with his counsel and afterwards receive unto glory.” He first guides with his counsel. None can be prepared for glory, or admitted into it, but those whom he has guided with his counsel. He trains for heaven, he makes meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, before he puts them in possession of it.

But when he has guided with his counsel, then he afterwards receives to glory. All such shall have an entrance administered to them into his eternal kingdom. When he has finished their education, he will give them the inheritance. Some are ripened for heaven sooner than others. But as soon as he has wrought them for the blessedness of the righteous, he will assuredly give them the crown of glory.

He will afterwards receive them to glory, after they have finished the work he intends they should perform. When their labours for his glory are completed, he will admit them to the joy of their Lord. His people are to serve him and their generation in his fear in the present life; and when their services are completed, they shall

shall rest from their labours; and receive that glorious crown which they with gratitude will cast at their Redeemer's feet, as the purchase of his blood.

He will afterwards receive them to glory, after he has guided them through all those sorrows and trials whereby infinite wisdom designed to fit them for glory. After they have suffered a while here, he will take them to himself. The cross will make the crown more welcome. The sufferings of the present state, make the joys of heaven more sweet. When these sufferings are all filled up, then they shall be admitted into that world where every tear shall be wiped from their eyes, and sorrow, sighing, and pain shall for ever flee away.

II. We proceed next to take notice of the Psalmist's comfortable manner of expressing himself, as to his own view of this happiness of the righteous, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory."

This implied,

1.) A comfortable persuasion that there was good ground for him to entertain this

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hope. Blessed be God, the meanest, weakest believer has ground from the oracles of truth, to assure himself, God will also guide him, and receive him to glory. Lord, thou shalt guide and receive me, though most unworthy and vile in myself, less than the least of all saints. I know and see and feel myself to be a very sinful, guilty creature: but, blessed be God, thou dost encourage such sinners as I am, committing their souls unto thee through Christ, to hope thou wilt take them under thy gracious conduct.

Thou shalt guide me, a poor, weak, helpless creature in myself. I am persuaded there is ground for me, under my great blindness and weakness, to hope that thou art ready to take me under thy gracious protection and conduct. I am sensible I much need it. I am afraid of leaning to my own understanding or strength. Many are my dangers, difficulties, and fears; but thou canst deliver me out of them all, and conduct me safe to thine eternal kingdom.

Blessed be God, we may further accommodate the words, "thou shalt guide me," as thou hast done my dear christian friends and relatives who are got safe to glory. I

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was a witness to their being guided by thy counsel. It is my support under my loss, that thou hast received them to thyself. It was thy grace that led them in thy ways. They were always acknowledging this truth with great humility and thankfulness. And thy grace is still the same; as able to guide me as my dear friends. Whilst thou hast by this affecting stroke deprived me of the benefit of any future assistance from them, from their further advice and instructions; I rejoice I may apply to thee to guide me in thy ways, by the effectual teachings of thy Spirit, that I may never depart from thee.

2.) The manner of expression imports the Psalmist's commission of himself unto God to be guided by him. Lord, I humbly put in for an interest in all the glorious blessings flowing from the divine conduct; and would humbly commit myself to thy gracious direction and disposal for both worlds, for soul and body, for time and eternity. I renounce following my own counsel. He had paid dear for it under this temptation. I desire to give up myself entirely unto thee; that thou alone mayest lead me. The words contain a de-

claration, through grace, of his choice of God, and acceptance of him, as his guide and portion.

3.) They speak his humble confidence in God to “guide him by his counsel, and “afterwards to receive him to glory,” and this under the recollection of his past experience of God’s mercy to him. Lord, I hope and trust in thee to go on to guide me still. I cheerfully rely upon thee never to forsake me in any trial, under any difficulty or danger. Thou hast promised to guide me. Thou standest engaged to do it, and hast approved thyself a faithful covenant-keeping God. And I confide in thee to accomplish all thy promised grace. I take thee at thy word. I give thee full credit for it. Lord, be it unto thy servant according to thy word. O remember thy word unto thy servant, on which thou causest me to hope.

4.) The words speak the Psalmist’s earnest desire of rightly improving the consideration of the believer’s happiness. Considering the connection with the context, it is evident that in this view he looked up to God with this encouraging address:

that he might be kept from envying the prosperity of sinners, that he might not be cast down under any present sharp trials—— that he might reconcile his mind to all the darkest providences in the present state—— and might be excited to hope in God, and triumph in him, through life and in death.

5.) The manner of expression speaks the great satisfaction which the Psalmist took in these precious truths. It speaks his rejoicing in the belief, prospect, and assurance that God would certainly fully accomplish all his gracious promises. What solid satisfaction and sublime joy (which strangers intermeddle not with, but which we wish you all to know by your own sweet experience) must they necessarily afford the soul relying firmly on God, and confiding in him, to guide with his counsel and afterwards to receive to glory. How will this administer the most solid support under all present sharpest trials, and lead the soul, under all, quietly to hope in God, to lead by a right way to the city of eternal habitation.

And how will these truths, thus believed, support the soul in death, enable to triumph in it and over it, and excite, if
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God gives opportunity for it, to bear an honourable dying testimony to the power, grace, and faithfulness, of the God of his salvation.

By way of improvement of this subject, we may,

1.) Remark the demonstration here given of the excellency of real religion. That religion which is seated in the heart. That kingdom of God which is in men. Wherever his grace erects this spiritual kingdom, the persons thus distinguished have the most abundant provision made for their felicity by Jehovah himself. He stands engaged to guide them by his counsel, and afterwards to receive unto glory.

2.) How vain merely to wish to die the death of the righteous; how fruitless to cry out, O that my latter end may be like unto theirs, if not in earnest concerned, through divine grace, to be trained up for heaven in the ways of righteousness, and to have a title to it secured to us by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith. Deceive not your own souls, sinners: "the wages of sin is death." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

“ Lord.” We must be made holy now, or we can have no admission into heaven. Remember the connection, “ thou shalt “ guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.” Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright man: for the end of that man is peace.

3.) What solid support under the death of our christian friends: they are received unto glory. If we truly loved them, should we not rejoice in their happy release from every evil, and in their being gone to their Father. By means of strokes so afflicting to us, God has answered his own final gracious purpose to them, to which all his dealings with them were directed: he has hereby fulfilled the grand promise of his grace to them: he has gratified their earnest expectations; he has answered their fervent prayers; and as soon as he had made them meet for glory, put them into immediate possession of it. Let these considerations reconcile us to their removal, and let their death quicken us to be ready.

4.) Let surviving friends take the same course. If we are enabled by the grace of God to follow our dear friends in God's ways

ways here, we may hope, through an all-sufficient Redeemer, shortly to follow them to glory. It was with very great satisfaction that the dear deceased expressed herself, when one of her sisters was not then come to her, that she hoped in a very few years they should all meet in a better world. O joyful meeting indeed! Shall any of us be missing at that family-meeting? Can we bear the thought of being for ever separated from those, whom we have highly valued on earth, whose company and conversation was one of our chief pleasures; and whose lives we have endeavoured by every kind office to render as comfortable as we could? Shall not the jealousy of every member of the families be roused at the very mention of such final separation? and each of us cry out, with alarming solicitude for himself, "Lord, is it I?" Our dear relative took much satisfaction in seeing her friends whilst she lived: but her highest pleasure in them will be to meet them all in glory. O my much esteemed friends, from the warmest affection to you, and from a most grateful sense of your very affectionate behaviour to the dear deceased and to myself, allow me to urge each of you, and all of you, to be followers of her, who through
 faith

faith and patience is now inheriting the promises.

As to you, my very dear young friends, the young branches of the families, who I know are much grieved for the loss you have sustained, may the Lord hear the many earnest prayers offered up for you by one who never forgot you in her best moments, and was especially fervent in supplication for you, that Christ might be formed in your hearts the hope of glory. May you be helped to recollect, and follow her advice for both worlds. May the Lord sanctify this bereavement, and lead you all to cry out with earnestness unto the God of all grace, "My Father, be thou the guide of my youth." May your honoured pious parents have this greatest satisfaction in you, of seeing you walking in the truth. That same grace that guided your dear relative from her earliest years, is gloriously sufficient to guide you also to the same happy end.

5. Let the people of God believe these encouraging truths, and live as believing them. Those with whom we have taken sweet counsel, with whom we have gone to the house of God in company, as also to a

throne of grace in private, the partners of our joys, they leave us to go the rest of the journey through the wilderness alone; but the Lord lives: our covenant God lives for ever and ever. He is the eternal and unchangeable Jehovah, the constant guide and everlasting portion of his people.

Let humble disconsolate believers assure themselves of the truth of the text, as applied to themselves. Ye fearful trembling christians, depend upon it that God will guide you with his counsel, and will continue to do it even unto death, and through the dark valley with all its terrors, and bring you safe to glory. To encourage your faith, and strengthen your hands and hearts, I would hold up the present instance of God's remarkable gracious conduct to his weak and timorous servants. The dear deceased's life, as she has often told me, was a life of fears. She had been in bondage all her life time through fear of death, and was frequently ready to fear she should be left to give up her profession, and to apprehend that hers was a mere profession. The great enemy was permitted to exercise her with many disquieting doubts. But still, under all these alarming distressing

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apprehensions, God's grace was her relief. He held her up, and, to the praise of the glory of his grace, enabled her to go on walking very humbly and very closely with God. In her last illness he was pleased, in a very wonderful manner, to carry her above all her fears; and he enabled her to triumph in God that he would "guide her with his counsel, and afterwards receive her to glory." I make this known for the encouragement and consolation of weak, timorous, doubting christians; desirous of complying with the divine injunction, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the Lord." I make this known, to the praise of the grace of my divine master, whom I hope I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his son. May the Lord enable every fearful believer, to hope and trust in him, to go on to guide him with his counsel: and if he does not see fit to indulge him with a triumphant dismissal, yet afterwards to receive him safe to glory.

F I N I S.

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